

Louisiana Natural Areas Registry Newsletter

Volume 1 No. 3

April 2004

We would like to thank all of our Natural Areas Registry members for participating in our program and we are here to help you with any issues or information that you may need. Our April newsletter includes: an update on the Natural Areas Registry, information on conservation programs available to landowners, and our featured natural area community this issue is the forested seep with an associated forested seep plant species – Northern Burmanian (*Burmanian biflora*), and a forested seep animal species – Red Salamander (*Pseudotriton ruber*).

Louisiana Natural Areas Registry Mission

The mission of the Louisiana Natural Areas Registry Program is to work with landowners toward the conservation of ecologically sensitive lands in Louisiana.

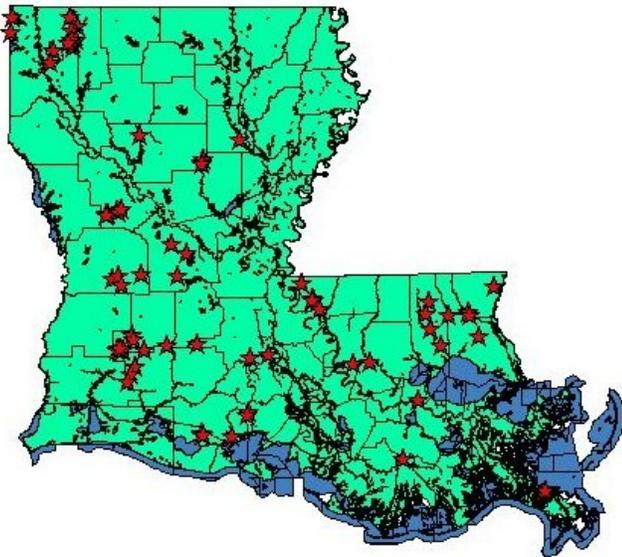
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Natural Areas Registry Update

by Judy Jones, contract biologist for Natural Areas Registry
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To date , we currently have 59 Natural Areas Registries located in 23 parishes consisting of over 33,516 acres that are being conserved as part of Louisiana's Natural Heritage.



Chris Reid, Judy Jones, and Weyerhaeuser forester Alan Boyd search for the tiny endangered plant, *Geocarpon minimum*, (enlarged picture below) in a saline prairie of central Louisiana.



The Louisiana Natural Areas Registry Program approved one Natural Area since the last newsletter in January 2004.

LeBlanc Savannah Natural Area is owned by Bryant Kountz and consists of 82.11 acres. It is located in Allen Parish and contains a flatwoods pond, and western longleaf pine savannah with pimple mounds. Bryant's property is in excellent condition. There are very few invasive and non-native plants. Additionally, it contains a wide plant diversity and distribution of tree age classes. All of these factors indicate a healthy actively growing ecosystem.

Conservation Programs

The following is a list of both state and federal conservation programs that are available to private landowners. Some programs provide cost-share funds for improvements to properties such as prescribed burning to maintain pineland and prairie habitats, and herbicides for control or eradication of invasive species. Feel free to contact LNHP for more information.

Louisiana Forestry Productivity Program (FPP) - LA Dept of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF), Provides financial assistance to eligible landowners for establishing and improving a crop of trees, Maximum payment annually \$10,000, Headquarters in Districts 1 – 10 and Lafayette. Bob Odom (225) 925-4500, <http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/divisions/forestry/forestmanagement/forestry-productivity-program.asp>

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), targets marginal pastureland, available to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land, Provides participants with rental payments and cost share assistance, contact local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) or (318) 473-7734, <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm>

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – lands in livestock or agricultural production, Establish native species, riparian buffers, herbaceous transition zone to provide good wildlife habitat, \$10,000 per fiscal year, cost-share up to 75 % establishment, sign up at FSA, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/>

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) – all land not enrolled in other USDA programs, management or restoration of upland habitat receive priority, Cost-share up to 75% establishment, sign up at Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) local office, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/>

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) – agricultural land containing restorable wetlands, pays 75 % restoration, easements – 75 to 100 % restoration cost and easement payments, sign up local NRCS office, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/>

Forest Stewardship Program - assists private forest landowners to more actively manage their forest and related resources, recognizes and rewards landowners making valuable contribution to LA and USA, Cody Cedotal (225) 765-2354, cedotal_c@wlf.state.la.us, <http://www.ldaf.state.la.us/divisions/forestry/forestmanagement/forest-stewardship-program.asp>

Partners for Fish and Wildlife - USFWS, technical and/or financial assistance for habitat restoration, Andy Dolan (337) 291-3100, <http://partners/fws/gov/>

Forest Health and Protection (FLEP) - LA Dept of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF), to promote sustainable forest management practices, minimum 10 acres, cost-share payments bases on 75 % actual cost, Louisiana Natural Heritage Program contact - Patti Faulkner (225) 765-2975.

Coastal Plain Conservancy - regional non-profit land trust, works with landowners to conserve and preserve natural resources, (337) 436-9401 extension 214, www.coastalplain.net

Hardwood Tree Initiative - restore floodplains by planting bottomland hardwood trees on private lands, participants will receive 50 % cost establishment and annual rental payment for 14 – 15 years, and technical assistant, sign up any time at FSA office, <http://www.usda.gov/news/releases/2003/12/0402.htm>

Farm Bill 2002 – Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program (CPGL) – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), helps owners and managers of private grazing land address natural resource concerns, NRCS technical assistance, non-financial, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cpgl/>

Farm Bill 2002 – Conservation Security Program (CSP) – (NRCS), provides payments for producers who historically have practices good stewardship on their agricultural lands, and incentives for those who want to do more, entitlement program and non-competitive, 3 Tiers Maximum annual payment Tier I \$20,000, Tier II \$35,000, Tier III \$45,000, Contact NRCS, <http://www.mnproject.org/csp/>

Farm Bill 2002 – Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) – helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture by providing matching funds to purchase conservation easements, NRCS, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp/>

Farm Bill 2002 – Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) – helps landowners and operators restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, Easement (permanent or 30 yr with all sign up costs associated provided and payments for up to 10 yrs) or rental agreement (10-yr, 15-yr, 20-yr, 30-yr at 75% of grazing value) with NRCS or FSA at any time, NRCS or FSA, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/>

Ducks Unlimited of Louisiana - contact Hugh Bateman (318) 340-1020 or hbateman@ducks.org, <http://www.ducks.org/conservation/Projects/Southern/LAConservationPrograms.asp>

The Nature Conservancy – Conservation Easements – protects land for future generations while allowing owners to retain many private property rights and to live on and use their land, at the same time potentially providing them with tax benefits, (225) 338-1040, lafo@tnc.org, <http://nature.org/>

Private Stewardship Grants Program – provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in local, private, and voluntary conservation efforts that benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species. A 10% match or through in-kind contributions is required. Contact Regional office of USFWS, <http://www.fedgrants.gov/Applicants/DOI/FWS/ES/PSGP-04/Grant.html>

North American Wetlands Conservation Fund (NAWCF) – (USFWS), provides grant funds for wetlands conservation projects, 1:1 match of nonfederal U.S. dollars, Standard Grants proposals – David Buie (david_buie@fws.gov (301) 497-5970. Small Grants Program proposals – Keith Morehouse (keith_morehouse@fws.gov (703) 358-1888, <http://www.fedgrants.gov/Applicants/DOI/FWS/FA/NAWCASG-04/Grant.html>

The Conservation Fund – Conservation Easements – protects land for future generations while allowing owners to retain many private property rights and to live on and use their land, at the same time potentially providing them with tax benefits. Nick Dilks, ndilks@conservationFunds.org, (703) 908-5836.

Land Trust Alliance – “Conservation Options: A Landowner’s Guide”, booklet available by request at Louisiana Natural Heritage Program contact - Patti Faulkner (225) 765-2975. Booklet outlines options available for protecting land per an individual’s personal situation such as 1) Want to retain title to the land 2) Want to receive compensation or 3) Want to continue to live on the land.

Louisiana Community Information
Forested Seep by Patti Faulkner

Forested seeps occur in north, central, and western portions of Louisiana, as well as in the eastern Florida Parishes of the state. They are typically in association with mixed pine-hardwood forests, on hillsides, at the base of slopes, and in narrow bottoms of small perennial or intermittent streams. Forested seeps are characterized by saturated soil conditions that develop when groundwater percolates through the characteristically quite sandy and acidic soils until it reaches an underlying impervious layer of typically clay or occasionally rock that forces the groundwater to flow laterally. Above this impervious layer, accumulation of muck or development of highly organic soils is common. This natural community type is usually very limited in size, seldom larger than a few acres, and often much smaller.



Forested seeps have a moderate to high species diversity. Sweet bay (*Magnolia virginiana*), swamp blackgum (*Nyssa biflora*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*) usually dominate the overstory and occasionally baldcypress (*Taxodium distichum*) can be important. Common shrubs include Virginia willow (*Itea virginica*), bigleaf waxmyrtle (*Myrica heterophylla*), swamp blackhaw (*Viburnum nudum*), poison sumac (*Rhus vernix*) in central and southeastern Louisiana, fetterbush (*Lyonia ligustrina*), and baygall blueberry (*Vaccinium fuscatum*). In north and central Louisiana, wild azalea (*Rhododendron oblongifolium*) is often present. In the Florida Parishes of southeast Louisiana, the above species plus swamp titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*), and sweet gallberry (*Ilex coriacea*), are common. The understory is typically covered with a blanket of ferns, including cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), royal fern (*O. regalis*), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), net-veined chain fern (*Lorinseria areolata*), Virginia chain fern (*Woodwardia virginica*), and southern lady fern (*Athyrium felix-femina*). Several orchid species may occur, such as green rein orchid (*Platanthera clavellata*), yellow crested orchid (*P. cristata*), and yellow fringed orchid (*P. ciliaris*). Sphagnum moss is often abundant.

The forested seep is an important natural community serving as sources or sinks for nutrients and nutrient transformation, improving water quality, and offering a refuge for both wildlife and a multitude of plant species. Seeps are considered rare in Louisiana due their limited size, position in the landscape, and sensitivity to disturbance. Threats to this natural community type include alteration of natural water flow patterns by road or other construction, mineral exploration and drilling, damage by feral hogs, agricultural runoff, and incompatible forestry practices on adjacent lands.

Associated Forested Seep Plant Species

Northern burmannia (*Burmannia biflora*) by Chris Reid

Northern burmannia is a small herbaceous plant that occurs in forested seeps in Louisiana. It ranges from Virginia to Texas. Northern burmannia has not been reported for Arkansas but is very likely to be found in the southern part of the state. Its habitat preference is fairly



uniform throughout its range including bogs, forested seeps, bayhead swamps, and pine flatwoods, which are all habitats that are wet and very acidic. In Louisiana northern burmannia occurs in St. Tammany and Washington Parishes in the southeastern part of the state and in Rapides, Grant, LaSalle, Catahoula, Vernon, Ouachita, Bienville, DeSoto, Webster, and Caddo Parishes west of the Mississippi River. It is fairly widely distributed in the state but is regarded as rare due to the relatively small number of known populations.



Northern burmannia ranges in height from 3 cm to 14 cm. Plants I've seen in Louisiana have averaged around 3-4 cm tall. The leaves are scale-like and tiny at only 1 mm or so long. The stems are usually not branched and are terminated by a solitary flower or several flowers in a loose cluster. The floral tube is subtended by three bracts that are violet in color. Flowering starts in late July and occurs through October. The best time for viewing is September through October. Last July I found what I thought was a small population in Webster Parish but returned in October to find thousands of plants at the site. Within our forested seeps northern burmannia tends to

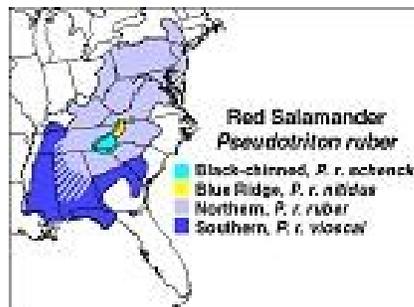
occur on small mossy hammocks rather than directly in the mucky substrate.

Some easily accessible areas where you can see northern burmannia include Wild Azalea Seep on the Evangeline District of Kisatchie National Forest near Elmer, southwest of Alexandria, and at a large forested seep at Wenks Landing on Bodcau Wildlife Management Area in Webster Parish. Kisatchie has much suitable habitat for northern burmannia and I think if you walk along headwater streams where seepage occurs then you could find additional populations. It is possible that there are many more populations out there than we are currently aware of.

Associated Forested Seep Animal

Red Salamander (*Pseudotriton ruber*) by Ines Maxit

Red salamanders are robust with short legs and tail that range in length from 3 7/8 to 7 1/8 inches. Young red salamanders are coral-red to reddish-orange dorsally and adults are orange-brown to purple-brown. Both young and adults have numerous irregularly shaped black spots dorsally. Colors on the back and belly blend gradually along sides. Their eyes are yellow and they have 16 to 17 grooves along their ribs.



There are 4 subspecies of Red Salamanders in North America. Northern Red Salamander (*Pseudotriton ruber ruber*) has small dark spots on its belly and edges of its back spots diffuse and tending to fuse together. They can be found in New York west to northern Indiana, south to Georgia and Alabama. Southern Red Salamander (*P. r. vioscai*) has a profusion of minute

white flecks over its body, especially on head, and its black spots usually distinct. They can be found in southern Georgia to southeastern Louisiana and north to western Tennessee in wet ravine bottoms. The Black-chinned Red Salamander (*P. r. schencki*) has heavy black pigment on its jaws. They can be found in the southern Blue Ridge Mountains south of French Broad River. The Blue Ridge Red Salamander (*P. r. nitidus*) has no black spots on the latter part of its tail and its belly is unspotted. They can be found in the southern Blue Ridge Mountains north and east of French Broad River. They are absent from the Atlantic coastal plain south of Virginia and from peninsular Florida.

Breeding may occur throughout the warmer months of the year, but egg deposition seems to occur in the autumn and winter months. Incubation averages 3 or more months. The eggs number about 25 (occasionally to more than 150) and are deposited singly. They are usually suspended from roots or rocks in cavities or in undercut banks, in seeps and rills. Females often remain in attendance of the clutch.



The larvae of all races of the salamanders are aquatic. They are quite dark but may have a vague reddish ting (Picture on left). Newly metamorphosed individuals are often yellowish like the picture below, but with growth this soon gives way to a variable red. Subadult examples are the most brightly colored.

Red salamanders are often associated with the environments of clear, rocky, streams. They also occur in Springs, their seepages, cool clear brooks and surrounding woodlands, swamps, and meadows. They have been seen at elevations of 5,000 feet (1,524 m) and higher. They hide beneath rocks and packed leaves.



Red Salamanders are quite cold tolerant and may be active in all but the coldest weather. A few red salamanders have been found active in icicle – bedecked, cliff base rivulets in the Appalachians. In the spring, when catkins emerge from pussy willows, and even later when trilliums carpet damp woodland floors, these salamanders emerge from winter lairs and become truly active. It is then that you might find them at night foraging in damp, leaf – carpeted woodlands.

Red Salamanders are more terrestrial than the Mud Salamander because they Red may be encountered some distance from water. However, they are usually seen in the leaf litter of spring - fed brooks or under nearby forest debris or rocks and are fond of earthworms.

Resources:

[U.S. Department of the Interior](http://www.usgs.gov/) || [U.S. Geological Survey](http://www.usgs.gov/)
[Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center](http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/), 8711 37th St. SE, Jamestown,
ND 58401 USA

URL: <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/narcam/idguide/psruber.htm>

Davidson College, Mecklinburg Co., North Carolina
<http://www.uga.edu/srelherp/jd/jdweb/Herps/species/ussalamander/psruber.htm>